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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /069 W
---------- 110581
R 301720Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0696
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, UK, EEC
SUBJECT: TRADE UNIONS AND THE REFERENDUM

1. SUMMARY. THE VOLATILE CHARACTER OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE REVERSAL AT ITS ANNUAL CONGRESS YESTERDAY (APRIL 29) BY THE SHOP WORKERS UNION (USDAW) OF A PRO-MARKET POSITION TAKEN BY ITS LEADERSHIP AT THE SPECIAL LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE.
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THIS SETBACK, ALTHOUGH THE VOTE WAS RELATIVELY CLOSE, AND

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THE UNION'S LEFT-WING HAD CONDUCTED A TOUGH CAMPAIGN TO OBTAIN IT, CONTRASTED WITH THE GENERAL SATISFACTION EXPRESSED BY PRO-MARKET TRADE UNIONISTS THAT THE PRO-MARKET VOTE AT THE LABOR CONFERENCE HAD BEEN HIGHER THAN EXPECTED. PRO-MARKET TRADE UNIONISTS WILL TRY TO GENERATE MORE SUPPORT FOR THEIR VIEW WHEN THEY LAUNCH TOMORROW A TRADE UNION ALLIANCE FOR EUROPE, UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF LORD VICTOR FEATHER, THE POPULAR EX-GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TUC. FOR ITS PART THE TUC LEADERSHIP HAS DECIDED TO CONDUCT AN ANTI-MARKET CAMPAIGN BUT THERE APPEARS TO BE A TACIT UNDERSTANDING AMONG BOTH ITS ANTI- AND PRO-MARKET LEADERS TO FOLLOW THE MARQUESS OF QUEENSBURY RULES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SHOP WORKERS UNION (USDAW), WHICH HAS 293,000 MEMBERS, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF LORD ALLEN, A VETERAN PRO-MARKETEER, VOTED THE PRO-MARKET LINE AT THE SPECIAL LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE, TOGETHER WITH -- AMONG THE LARGER UNIONS -- THE MUNICIPAL WORKERS (GMWU) WITH 650,000 MEMBERS; THE NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN (NUR), WITH 164,000; THE UNION OF POST OFFICE WORKERS, WITH 183,000; THE ELECTRICAL WORKERS (EEPTU), WITH 350,000 AND THE PROFESSIONAL AND CLERICAL WORKERS (APEX), WITH 100,000. THE ANTI-MARKET FORCES MUSTERED 3.7 MILLION VOTES -- LARGELY FROM THE UNIONS -- OF WHICH THE TRANSPORT WORKERS (TGWU) AND THE ENGINEERING WORKERS (AUEW) ALONE ACCOUNTED FOR NEARLY TWO MILLION VOTES.

3. THUS, UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PRO-MARKET UNIONS (SEE LONDON 5310) COULD NOT HAVE EXPECTED TO MUSTER MORE THAN TWO MILLION VOTES AND THEY CAME FAIRLY CLOSE TO THIS OPTIMUM DESPITE THE FACT THAT SOME UNIONS WERE TIED BY ANTI-MARKET RESOLUTIONS OF THEIR VARIOUS ANNUAL CONFERENCES AS LONG AS TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO. SECONDLY, THE ANTI-MARKET FORCES HAVE BEEN, IN THE NATURE OF THINGS, THE MORE AGGRESSIVE GROUP IN VIEW OF THE TUC POSITION OF "CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO THE EC," REAFFIRMED AT THE LAST TUC CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER 1974. MOREOVER, TUC GENERAL COUNCIL RECENTLY DECIDED THAT THE RENEGOTIATED TERMS WERE INSUFFICIENT AND AGREED TO LAUNCH ITS OWN ANTI-
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MARKET CAMPAIGN, WITH SPEAKERS,BROCHURES AND OTHER MEANS. (THE TUC, HOWEVER, HAS ACCEPTED THAT PRO-MARKET UNIONS WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONDUCT THEIR OWN CAMPAIGN.)

4. NOW, THE PRO-MARKET UNIONS ARE BEGINNING TO GET INTO THE BATTLE. THE POPULAR LORD VICTOR FEATHER, FORMER TUC GENERAL SECRETARY HAS AGREED TO ACT AS PRESIDENT OF THE TRADE UNION ALLIANCE FOR EUROPE, WHICH WILL LAUNCH ITS

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CAMPAIGN FOR A "YES" VOTE TOMORROW. LORD FEATHER TOLD US THAT DAVID WARBURTON, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE MUNICIPAL WORKERS WILL BE CHAIRMAN, AND ROY GRANTHAM, A LONG-STANDING PRO-MARKETEER, WILL SERVE AS SECRETARY. OTHER LEADING UNIONISTS INCLUDING LORD ALLEN, CYRIL PLANT, SIR DAI DAVIES, TOM JACKSON ARE SERVING AS VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE ALLIANCE. LORD FEATHER IS CONFIDENT THAT DESPITE THE OFFICIAL TUC POSITION, THE LABOR PARTY VOTERS WILL SPLIT 50-50 IN THE REFERENDUM VOTE, AND THAT THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE LIBERALS WILL FAVOR THE EC ON A 3 TO 1 BASIS. IN THE MEANWHILE, HE AND OTHER PRO-MARKETEERS WILL BE TRYING TO SELL THE ADVANTAGES OF THE COMMUNITY TO TRADE UNION

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MEN AROUND THE COUNTRY. THE PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF ANTI-MARKETEER JACK JONES IS, INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, NOT FAR REMOVED FROM THAT OF FEATHER'S. JONES TOLD US THAT THE REFERENDUM VOTE WILL BE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND THAT THE LABOR PARTY VOTE AND THE TUC POSITION WILL HAVE ONLY MARGINAL EFFECT (LONDON 5600).

5. THUS FAR AT LEAST, THE TUC LEADERS -- APART FROM SUCH

EXCEPTIONS AS CLIVE JENKINS, WHO IS EXTREMELY ACTIVE, OFTEN VERY VITRIOLIC, IN HIS ATTACKS ON THE EC AND ALL ITS PARTS -- HAS BEEN TRYING TO KEEP THE EC ISSUE WITHIN BOUNDS AND TO ENSURE THAT THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN IS CONDUCTED UNDER MARQUESS OF QUEENSBURY RULES. THERE APPEARS TO BE A TACIT UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SUCH ANTI-MARKETEERS AS JONES AND PRO-MARKETEERS AS DAVID BASNETT TO AVOID THE KIND OF DEBILITATING FIGHT WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT WHICH IS RENDING THE LABOR PARTY GENERALLY. BUT IT IS A VOLATILE SITUATION AND IN THE WEEKS AHEAD WE SHALL SEE WHETHER THIS COOLER APPROACH WILL CONTINUE TO PREVAIL. TO BE SURE, COMMUNISTS, MAKING HEAVY USE OF THEIR NEWSPAPER "THE MORNING STAR," AND OTHER EXTREME LEFT-WING ELEMENTS WILL BE WORKING HARD TO STIR THINGS UP AGAINST A "YES" VOTE.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, LABOR UNIONS, SPECIAL ELECTIONS, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON06527
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750151-1115
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975044/aaaaadco.tel
Line Count: 206
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <21 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRADE UNIONS AND THE REFERENDUM
TAGS: ELAB, UK, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006